



The President's Daily Brief

16 November 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

The Laotian peace talks are getting to serious discussion of the Communist proposals. (Page 1)

Britain's forceful entry into Europe is causing concern in Paris about France's role as a leader of the Communities. (Page 3)

East German propaganda reviling Bonn's Social Democrats is designed to help enhance internal security rather than to signal a reneging on the inter-German accord. (Page 4)

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LAOS

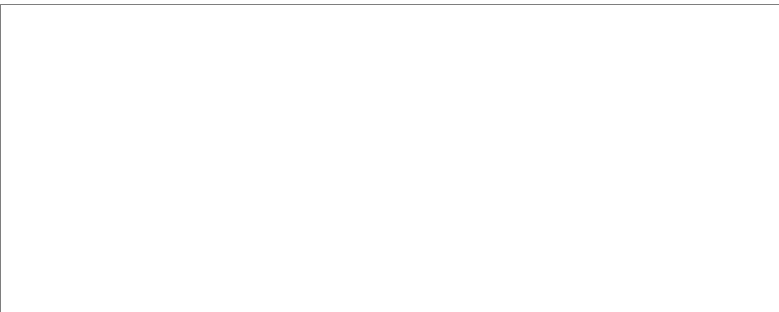
For the first time since peace talks opened five weeks ago, government negotiator Pheng Phongsavan on Tuesday spoke directly to the Lao Communists' five-point peace proposal.

Simply stated, the Communist proposal calls for freedom of resettlement and travel of people displaced by the war;

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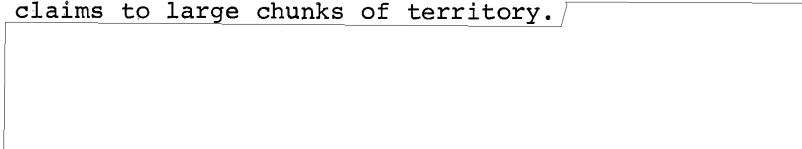
neutrality in Laotian foreign policy; formation of a new provisional government and other entities to prepare for a permanent government; and a cease-fire in place.

The key areas of disagreement, not surprisingly, concern the mechanics of an internal political settlement and the precise terms of a cease-fire. The Communists refuse to resume their place in the present government. The government insists that a settlement provide for withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from Laos, and not just Thai forces and US advisers.



During talks on the issue of a cease-fire in place, the government negotiator has counterproposed that both sides withdraw to 1962 cease-fire lines. This is not as simple as it sounds, for no cease-fire lines were agreed to in the Geneva Accords of that year. In fact, both sides accepted the 1962 accords without abandoning conflicting claims to large chunks of territory.

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(continued)

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At the moment, the Communists control more territory than they did in 1962. In the south, they hold the Bolovens Plateau, and in the north, the Plaine des Jarres. During the latest negotiations, neither side has given up efforts to gain territory in advance of a cease-fire. The Communists have been successful in keeping General Vang Pao's irregulars from reoccupying any part of the Plaine des Jarres, but the government has retaken several towns near the Bolovens Plateau.

Souvanna told a journalist yesterday that he has called for a meeting with Souphanouvong in Luang Prabang, the royal capital, presumably to try to work out details of a settlement as they did in 1962.

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UK-FRANCE

Britain is demonstrating a growing assertiveness in European affairs since it was accepted for membership in the Common Market. Prime Minister Heath's strong role during his first European summit meeting in October is but one example. Britain's Defense Minister, Lord Carrington, has indicated that his government wants to formulate a continental defense policy based on a European nuclear force.

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The French are concerned that Britain's assertiveness will be at the expense of their leadership role in Europe. President Pompidou admitted to uneasiness about France's relative influence during his briefing of the press last month, contending that the British were seeking disproportionate influence in the Communities. Pompidou's statement may also reflect some personal rivalry with Heath. The French official who told the US Embassy in Paris of the Eurogroup proposal has characterized it as "highly dangerous," because planning now for a European defense force could encourage the US to withdraw from Europe.

As for a joint Franco-British nuclear force, current French thinking does not exclude it but reasons that it may be some 20 years away, after Europe is integrated in an economic, monetary, and political sense.

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EAST GERMANY - WEST GERMANY

East German media have loosed a barrage of invective against the social philosophy and domestic policies of West Germany's Social Democratic Party. The criticism focuses on the Social Democrats' "adherence to capitalistic doctrines" and their "corruption of the international socialist movement." The regime hits hard at what it calls the Social Democrats' efforts to influence the East German population and emphasizes the "unbridgeable differences" between East and West German societies.

Pankow's blast reflects its desire to limit the impact at home of the recently initialed inter-German treaty, which clears the way for increased contacts between the two German states. The regime is attempting to underscore to its citizens that differences with Bonn will continue, and that for them, the advantages from detente will be limited. Pankow's concern for its own stake in detente, reinforced by pressure from Moscow, should, however, keep East Germany from reneging on the practical improvements worked out with Bonn.

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NOTES

India-USSR: Plans for a joint Soviet-Indian naval exercise this autumn, [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] have evidently fallen through. The Soviets 25X1
may have balked at the exchange of sensitive information on naval tactics that would have been required for a combined exercise.

Pakistan-France: [redacted] 25X1
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Uganda: [redacted] 25X1
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